

From the Rt Hon Greg Clark MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

William Benson  
Chief Executive  
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

12<sup>th</sup> September 2023

Dear William

I would be grateful if you would initiate an Antisocial Behaviour Case Review as provided for by the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 to address the increasing number of incidents of antisocial behaviour which have taken place across Tunbridge Wells during the last six months.

I am listing below a small number of the incidents that in my view justify invoking this Community Trigger, although I stress that they are a sample which are representative of many more.

These are incidents that you are already aware of that took place in August:

- vandalism at St John's Recreation Ground and intimidation of local residents. Significant damage to toilet block, doors damaged, sink ripped off the wall and pipework damaged.
- damage to the Great Hall car park in which a group of youths caused criminal damage to the lift and doors to the car park.
- baby change unit vandalised in Grosvenor and Hilbert Park
- damage to the ceiling and roof of the public toilets in Commercial Road, Paddock Wood



There are many other incidents which have been reported to me by constituents or via local media:

- April – damage to garden and fence at residents near St John’s Park including intimidating behaviour, and threats.
- 8<sup>th</sup> May - video on social media of two youths who were seen throwing objects, including signs, onto cars from the roof of the Crescent Road car park and spitting on pedestrians.
- 21<sup>st</sup> May – Tesco Express in Paddock Wood trashed by a group of youths, flour and eggs thrown on workers and over tills and shop.
- July – allotment holder punched by gang of five young people.
- 21<sup>st</sup> August – Albert Street, Tunbridge Wells. Front door was smashed by young people in an unprovoked attack. Glass was smashed over the householder and his pregnant girlfriend resulting in cuts to the man’s face and body.
- 22<sup>nd</sup> August – Violent and intimidating behaviour from many youths in the town centre and Grosvenor Park area. A constituent reported breaking glass in the private car park (Albert Street) trying to break the gate and damaging vehicles in the car park, resulting in £600 worth of damage to one car. When neighbours confronted the youths, they were met with abusive language and threats.
- End August – young people seen throwing 2L bottles of fizzy drink from roof of Crescent Road car park onto passers by, one elderly lady very shaken as one narrowly missed her.



- 28<sup>th</sup> August – intimidating behaviour towards member of Greggs staff witnessed by other customers, when challenged became abusive and stole food. Left to join a gang outside who were open about having stolen good from Boots.

I hope you will agree that it is in the overwhelming interest of the community for coordinated and escalated action to be taken to address this growing and unacceptable blight on the peace enjoyed by the residents of our Borough.

I look forward to your formal response and to meet with the relevant agencies to take this forward.

I am copying this letter to Chief Inspector Stu Paul and Chief Superintendent Neil Loudon of Kent Police and Matthew Scott, the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner.

Greg Clark

Member of Parliament for Tunbridge Wells